Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1564 - August 3, 2007

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1564 with a release date of Friday, August 3, 2007 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. The ARRL Board of Directors say NO to lifestyle and checks of ham radio volunteers. Also, the ARRL will not revisit Regulation by Bandwidth right now, the FCC says yes to a 700 MHz rescue radio bandplan and NCVEC meets with the FCC. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1564 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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ARRL POLITICS: ARRL BOD SAYS "NO" TO BACKGROUND CREDIT CHECKS

The ARRL Board of Directors has issued a policy statement saying no to the demand by served agencies for lifestyle and financial background checks on Amateur Radio volunteers. The action came at the recent Board of Directors Meeting held July 20th and 21st. Don Carlson, KQ6FM, is in Reno with more:

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A major concern to the ARRL Board of Directors was the topic of served agencies and background investigations. An Ad Hoc Background Investigation Committee empanelled by the ARRL some time ago agreed that pursuing federally recognized credentialing for Amateur Radio volunteers was critical for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service to function. The Committee chairman, Atlantic Division Director Bill Edgar, N3LLR, proposed that the Board adopt a policy with regard to Memoranda of Understanding with the various served agencies.

After some discussion the Board did approve a policy on this issue. One that says communications volunteers participating in ARRL sponsored programs should not be required by served agencies to undergo background investigations of any kind. The Directors did however note that criminal background checks as performed by law enforcement agencies are generally acceptable.

But the policy statement also seemed to refute the American Red Cross demand that its contractor, mybackgroundcheck dot com, be given free reign to delve into a volunteers personal finances and lifestyle. While the ARRL Board did

not name the American Red Cross in its policy statement, to anyone familiar with the position of the American Red Cross on this issue the intent is hard to miss. The ARRL policy continues -- and we quote:

"It is not reasonable for a served agency to require these volunteers to consent to credit checks, mode of living investigations or investigative consumer reports. In negotiating or renegotiating Memoranda of Understanding that commits the League to provide volunteer emergency communications support, the League must be assured that these volunteers will not be required by the partner organization to consent to credit checks, mode of living investigations or investigative consumer reports." - End quote.

The ARRL policy stopped short of telling those radio amateurs wanting to volunteer to agencies that require credit and lifestyle checks not to do so. That said, many hams will likely now think twice before clicking away their financial information to any group that wants them to work for free.

In Reno, I'm Don Carlson, KQ6FM, for the Amateur Radio Newsline.

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The bottom line.: It appears that the ARRL Board of Directors has now thrown the hot issue of lifestyle and credit check demands back in the lap of the American Red Cross and any other served agency that might make such a demand of ham radio volunteers. That also leaves the next move is up to them. (Adapted from ARRL)

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ARRL POLITICS: BOD VOTES TO EVEN ELECTION PLAYING FIELD

The ARRL Board of Directors has leveled the proverbial playing field in regard to the election process for Directors, Vice Directors and Section Managers. This by clarifying the Rules and Regulations concerning mass communication of campaign material at the ARRL's expense. Henry Feinberg, K2SSQ, reports:

For years, challengers in ARRL divisional elections have claimed that incumbents have had an unfair advantage in that they had access to materials that the challenger did not. Now the Board of Directors has acted to prohibit all types of mass communications by any candidate

for these three offices where-in the ARRL winds
up paying any of the costs involved.

Specifically prohibited is any communications
where the material is distributed at League
expense by mail, electronic distribution
including Web sites, hand delivery or any other
means to League members in the particular
Division or Section involved in an
election. This if the material might reasonably
be expected to affect the outcome of the election during the campaign
 period.

According to ARRL specialist Dave Patton, NN1N,
this basically means that all candidates running
for office candidates cannot use ARRL resources
to campaign. However, the new rule does not
prohibit a candidate from creating his or her own
materials and distributing them using any means
he or she may desire, as long as its done at the candidates own expense.

For the amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Henry Feinberg, K2SSQ, in New York.

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The new election rule is effective immediately. (ARRL, ARNewsline(tm))

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ARRL POLITICS: ARRL ASKS COORDINATORS TO COORDINATE D-STAR

The American Radio Relay League has at least
tacitly endorsed the JARL-developed D-STAR
digital voice and data communications scheme for
relay system use on the VHF and UHF ham
bands. Its also asking current FM repeater
coordinators to both recognize and accommodate it
and other digital voice ciphers through the
formal coordination process. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is here with more:

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Though D-STAR and, to a lesser degree, APCO 25
protocols are gaining in popularity as a
replacement for analog F-M repeaters, some
coordinators have come to wonder to what extent
either of these systems fall within the FCC
definition of an Amateur service relay device?   A repeater if you will.

But the ARRL is leaving that to be decided by the
FCC at some later date if the regulatory agency
ever chooses to do so. For its part the ARRL
Board has requested that coordinators begin now
to extend their efforts to recommend operating
channels to digital voice systems and to consider
the bandwidths that they actually required for successful operation.

Currently only Icom supplies D-STAR ham radio gear but other manufacturers are expected to quickly jump on the D-STAR bandwagon. Especially now that there are more than 60 D-STAR repeaters in operation across the United states and more on their way.

The main reason APCO 25 is lagging so far behind D-STAR is the licensing fee required by its codec patent owner. While the P 25 platform is public domain, the encoder decoder is not and carries with it a fairly steep cost. On the other hand D-STAR requires no license fee be paid. The Japan Amateur Radio League saw fit to put its technology fully in the public domain. Anyone with the ability to do so can design a codec for it, but it must be made available to anyone to use.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline. I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF. I'm in the studio in Los Angeles.

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How the more than fifty repeater coordinators nation wide will react to this ARRL Board request to coordinate digital repeaters will take some time to be known. The ARRL Board did thank all existing VHF/UHF frequency coordination groups for their efforts to promote orderly use of Amateur Radio frequencies. (ARRL)

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RADIO RULES: ARRL WILL NOT REFILE NOW ON REGULATION BY BANDWIDTH

Sometimes its what you don't say that means a lot. While the ARRL is vocal regarding digital in the world above 50 MHz, it's a different story on the high frequency bands. This with word what the ARRL Board did not appear to even discuss another petition to the FCC on the controversial subject of Regulation by Bandwidth. Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, reports:

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While the League has yet to make a formal announcement, word leaked to the ham community by those with knowledge of what transpired at the recent ARRL Board of Directors meeting. They say that the matter was only briefly touched on and that the directors have at least unofficially decided to take a wait and see position. This, while the nations ham community continues to discuss and debate the issue on the air and on-line.

It was only last April that the ARRL withdrew the controversial November 2005 Regulation by Petition for Rule Making RM-11306. It did so it cited what it called "widespread misconceptions" surrounding the petition as a primary reason for deciding to remove it from FCC consideration. At that time the ARRL left open the option of refileing the same or a similar request in the future, however it appears as if now is not that time.

But this does not mean the issue of Regulation by Bandwidth is dead. Its quite conceivable that one or more petitions asking for a change away from designated subbands and over to some form of regulation by bandwidth will be generated from various interest groups within the ham community.

I'm Don Wilbanks, AE5DW.

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As we go to air there are no Regulation by Bandwidth petitions currently awaiting any action before the FCC. (ARNewsline(tm), listener input)

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Break 1

 From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the Hamfesters Radio Club net serving Bedford Park, Illinois

(5 sec pause here)

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ON THE AIR: 6 AND 2 OPEN THE LAST WEEK OF JULY

An amazing last week of July foir D-X on 6 and 2 meters. Hams around the world are reporting superb conditions in the world above 50 MHz that began on the 28th U-T-C.

For example, Scott Avery, WA6LIE, up in Silanas, California reports that he was alerted to the opening by his television set. That from 1600 to 2200 UTC he saw television channel 2 from Seattle with a clear picture and 59 audio.   On the ham bands Scott says there were a lot of double and triple hop signals on both bands. At 2110 UTC he talked to VE6EGN ingrid square DO23 on 144.200 Mhz while running only 45 watts to a 13 element beam at 40 feet.

Meantime, Bob Brown, KR7O, says over the VHF

Reflector that he made contact with stations in grids CM 97 and CM98 during that same frame of time. KR7O adds that at 2125 UTC that 6 meters was wide open again to Washington, Idaho, Montana and up into Canada as well.

On July 29th, at 23:53, Bob Cox, K4AVO, in central North Carolina reported over the 50 MHz Prop Logger that he was hearing the VE1SMU propagation beacon on 50.001. Its located in Halifax Nova Scotia almost a thousand miles away.

On the other side of the world, Hatsuo Yoshida, JA1VOK, in grid square QM05 reports hearing the BV2NT propagation beacon in Taipei, Taiwan also on 50.001 MHz. It was hitting his QTH in Chiba, Japan, with a very strong 599 signal.

And on July 30th Bob Cox, K4AVO, in Grid FM06 reported hearing CO8LY calling C-Q on 50.095 in C-W. CO8LY is located in Cuba.

Lots of D-X out there on 6 and 2 meters. All you have to do is fire up and keep an ear on the calling frequencies of 50 point 125 and 144 dot 200 MHz. Its there for you to enjoy. (ARNewsline(tm))

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RADIO LAW: FCC CREATES INTEROPERABLE 700 MHZ RESCUE RADIO BANDPLAN

The FCC has revised its 700 MHz bandplan and service rules to promote the creation of a nationwide interoperable broadband network for public safety. The congressionally mandated change will also facilitate the availability of new and innovative wireless broadband services for consumers.

In a Second Report & Order adopted on Tuesday, July 31st, the Federal Communications Commission revised the band plan which runs from 698-806 MHz. This spectrum is currently occupied by television broadcasters but will be made available for other wireless services, including public safety and commercial use, as a result of the digital television transition.

The Digital Television and Public Safety Act of 2005 set a firm deadline of February 17, 2009, for the completion of the DTV transition. In implementing Congress' directive to reallocate the 700 MHz airwaves, the Commission was focused on serving the public interest and the American people. The service rules that the Commission has now adopted should help create a national broadband network for public safety that will

address the interoperability problems of today's system. It should also provide for a more open wireless platform that will facilitate the emergence of next generation wireless broadband services in both urban and rural areas. (FCC)

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RADIO TESTING: FCC AND NCVEC HOLD ANNUAL MEETING

The 2007 meeting of the National Conference of Volunteer Examination Coordinators and the FCCs was held in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on Friday, July 27. Amateur Radio Newsline's Bruce Tennent, K6PZW, tells us what went on:

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There were 11 Volunteer Examination Coordinators represented at this years gathering between the National Conference of Volunteer Examination Coordinators and the FCC. Together these groups represent more than 98% of all examinations administered in the Amateur Service in the United States.

Also in attendance were FCC staffers Donna Scott, Sandra Eckenrode, Terry Fishel and Riley Hollingsworth. Bill Cross, W3TN, from the Wireless Telecom Bureau acted as moderator for the FCC discussions.

Cross first reviewed recent Commission decisions that have affected the VEC's including Wireless Telecommunications Bureau docket items 04-140 and 05-235. He was followed by Riley Hollingsworth who said that complaints have been greatly reduced over the past two years.

In his remarks Hollingsworth noted that enforcement of amateur service rules will continue to be a permanent part of the FCC's regulatory effort. He also noted that although the licensing structure is now simpler, that VECs remain vigilant.

Question Pool Committee Chairman Jim Wiley, KL7CC of the Anchorage VEC gave a preliminary report. He said that the committee is now looking ahead to revising the Element 4 question pool to be used for Extra Class written examinations effective July 1, 2008. The Question Pool Committee is planning to release the entire pool which will include the syllabus on or around December 1st of this year.

Another of the agenda items was a discussion on whether or not the NCVEC should develop a position and issue a statement about foreign language exams. In this regard the ARRL VEC made

a motion that N-C-V-E-C approved Spanish language question pools and make them available in addition to the English language version. That motion did not carry.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline. I'm Bruce Tenbnent, K6PZW, in Los Angeles

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The VEC Conference has been held annually since 1985 with the exception of 1999. The complete report on this years NCVEC and FCC meeting is on line on the front newspage at www.qrz.con (NCVEC, QRZ.COM)

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ENFORCEMENT: HAM ASKED TO EXPLAIN HIS OPERATIONS

Turning to enforcement news, the FCC has written to Robert J. Langston, W2ENY, of Cornwall on Hudson, New York asking him to explain a complaint regarding the operation of his station. The FCC says that the complaint alleges transmission of recordings, including recordings of the radio transmissions of other operators, and false identification of transmissions.

The FCC says that if the information in its possession if true, it raises serious questions regarding Langston's qualifications to retain an Amateur license. It asks him to respond in detail to a number of questions regarding the complaint and to support his response with a signed and dated affidavit or declaration. One that under penalty of perjury, verifies the truth and accuracy of the information submitted in his response.

The FCC also told Langston that his license is due for renewal in December of this year. As such the Commission the authority to obtain information from applicants and licensees about the operation of their station and their qualifications to remain a licensee. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: THAT FREQUENCY IS NOT FOR USE

The FCC is asking Frederick C. Severa, AH8I, of Pago Pago, American Samoa, to explain why he has been monitored as operating SSB on 7.055 MHz. This, back on February 12th of this year.

In its July 25th letter to Severa sent via the American Samoa DX Society in California, the Commission says that such operation may reflect adversely on his qualifications to retain an Amateur Radio license.

The letter directs Severa to contact the FCC within 30 days to discuss the matter with peial Counsel Riley Hollingsworth. It also asks Severa to verify his current address since the Commission's first attempt to contact him was returned as undeliverable. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: UNLICENSED OPERATION BRINGS $10000 FINE

A big fine for a Texan who put a radio on the air without FCC permission to do so. Again, Amateur Radio Newsline's Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, has more:

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The FCC has issued a a monetary forfeiture in the amount of $10,000 to Michael Thomas McCollum of Houston, Texas. This for his alleged willful and repeated violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act by operating a radio transmission apparatus without a license.

By way of background, on May 23, 2007, the FCC's Houston Office issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture in the amount of $10,000 to McCollum. The FCC says that McCollum has not filed a response to the N-A-L. So based on the information before it, the FCC acted on July 13th to affirm the forfeiture.

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McCollum was given the customary 30 days to pay or to file an appeal. (FCC)

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RADIO EDFUCATION: FAR ANNOUNCES 2007 SCHOLARSHIP AWAR WINNERS

The Foundation for Amateur Radio has announced the winners of 56 scholarships for the 2007 academic year. The list is far to long to include here but will shortly be available in numerous ham radio print publications.

The Foundation for Amateur Radio is a District of Columbia based non profit organization representing one 50 radio clubs along the central Atlantic coast. The scholarships it administers are open to all licensed radio amateurs who meet the qualification and residence requirements of the various sponsors More information about the foundation and the scholarship program is on line at www.amateurradio-far.org/ (FAR)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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ON THE WEB: FREE ON-LINE REPEATER MAP LOCATOR FROM K5EHX

A new free service for those who want to know where a repeater is located and its approximate service area. Thanks to Tom White, K5EHX, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, such a place in cyberspace now exists.

Toms repeater database is tied to Google Maps and lets you search by tags, city, state or zip code. Tom says that the original idea was to make it easier to search for repeaters in a given area for planning a trip.

You can try it for yourself at http://k5ehx.net/repeaters/ We did. Its fun and it works very, very well.. (K5EHX)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: NEW DIGITAL HAM RADIO REMAILER FORMED

And a new cyberspace retailer dedicated exclusively to the emerging world of digital Amateur Radio communications has been formed on Yahoogroups. This e-mail reflector will primarily discuss the use of digital voice and data communication techniques on the VHF and UHF bands. Technology to be addressed will include D-STAR, APCO P25, packet radio including APRS, High Speed Multi Media, Wi-Fi, P-S-K and F-S-K. To join the group just take your web browser to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/illinoisdigitalham/ and follow the sign up instructions. (WB9QZB)

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RESTRUCTURING - FOLOOW UP: DENMARK LICENSES 40 MHZ HAM RADIO BEACON ACTIVATED

A follow-up to last weeks story on Denmark's telecommunications regulator having approved a

permit for a ham radio beacon on 40.021 MHz. According to OZ7IS, the OZ7IGY beacon came to life at 18.20 UTC on July 26th. The output power is 22 watts to a dipole antenna. That will shortly be changed to an omni-directional Turnstile radiator. The license for OE7IGY is valid for a year. Reception reports from around the world 64-oz-beacon go by e-mail to oz7is at qrz.dk (Southgate)

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PUBLIC SERVICE: MARSGRAM SERVES KIDS AT CAMP

The Army MARS new Winlink Messaging System has provided real-life connections for some 200 boys and girls whose separation from family members had very special significance. Capt. Jeff Hammer N9NIC who holds the MARS call sign AAR5WL is an Afghanistan veteran. HE recently set up his portable MARS station at the Indiana Guard's Family Program Youth Camp at Camp Atterbury . He briefed each camper's family on sending a MARSgram.

MARSgrams are free radio messages that connect service personnel and their family and friends. As in many summer programs, phone calls and e-mail were not allowed. The MARSgram was Hammer's solution.

Before e-mail and the cell-phone, amateur radio operators in the Military Affiliate Radio System handled hundreds of thousands of them for troops in the Korean War, Vietnam and the first Gulf War. The service is still available though not as frequently utilized as it once was. (ACapitalNewsOnline)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: P3E HARDWARE TO BE READY BY YEARS END

The hardware for the eagerly awaited AMSAT Phase 3E ham radio satellite should be completed by the end of 2007. The announcement came at the recently concluded AMSAT-UK International Space Colloquium. That's where it was also made known that Phase 3E will be the first Amateur satellite to operate at 47 GHz. It is also will use 145 MHz and 435 MHz along with the 1.260, 2.4, 5, 10 GHz Amateur Radio Microwave bands.

As yet there is no launch date. AMSAT is exploring possibilities of an Arianne launch from the ESA site at Kourou in 2008 or on a Soyuz launcher from the new Russian launch site under construction also at Kourou. (ANS)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: AMSSAT-UK BEGINNERS WORKSHOP A HIT

The recent AMSAT - UK Beginners Workshop is being described as a truly smashing success and attracted a lot of newcomers to the hobby. Among the many attendees were six members of the University of Surrey Electronics and Amateur Radio Society, all of whom hold Foundation or Intermediate licenses.

AMSAT-UK has held Beginners Workshops at its Annual Colloquium in Guildford, England for 20 years. The aim of these workshops is to show new hams how to get started in the exciting world of Amateur Satellite Communications. It was AMSAT-UK that successfully campaigned to have access to the Amateur Satellite Service available to all United Kingdom amateurs, regardless of the license class that they hold. (Southgate)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: JAPAN AMSAT DONATES 1,000,000 YEN TO P3E

Peter Gï¿½lzow, DB2OS reports on the AMSAT D L web site that Japan AMSAT has donated 1,000,000 Yen in support of the Phase 3-E satellite. 1,000,000 yen is the equivalent of 6,136 Euros or $8,407 U-S dollars at the current rate of exchange. The monies will be used to help complete and launch the Phase 3 E bird. More is on-line, in German. At the U-R-L in this weeks Amateur radio Newsline report. (ANS)

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WORLDBEAT - SOUTH AFRICA: SARL WT ATTEND GAREC O7

The South African Radio League has added its name to the growing list of groups that will be represented at the upcoming 2007 Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference.

The gathering is slated to be held in Huntsville, Alabama, on August 16th and 17th just prior to the opening of the 2007 Huntsville Hamfest. This years meeting is focussing on the application of advanced technologies in emergency communications.

The two-day conference will be packed with practical information, and experts will arrange demonstrations of the capabilities of 21st century communications technology. This will include many diverse aspects Amateur Radio as applied to emergency and disaster response. (Southgate)

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DX

Six members of the Japan Amateur Radio League's Kyoto Club will be operating JA3YAQ portable J60 through August 6th. This, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their club on the island of Pohnpei. The operation will use CW, SSB, FM, RTTY and PSK31 on 160 through 6 meters from the South Park Hotel. QSL as directed on the air.

Also on right now are DL2RMC and DL1RTL who will be active portable TK from Corsica through August 8th. Look for them on 160 through 6 meters on CW and the Digital modes. They will have vertical antennas for the low bands with their activity also being a holiday style operations. QSL via their home callsigns.

And, listen out for W1ADX, will be active portable 9A from a few of the Dalmatian Islands through August 7th. Activity will be holiday style as time permits. QSL via IN3DEI.

Lastly, for those of you who worked KL7FF in June there is now a QSL route. You can send your QSL, along with an Self Addressed Stamped Envelope to to Paul Kiesel, K7CW , P.O. Box 112 Tahuya, Washington, 98588. Paul says that he has received the cards from the printer and will send you a KL7FF card immediately on receipt of your card.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: THE ARTISTRY OF ANCIENT GREECE IS IN THE SOUND

And finally this week, another kind of communications. That of the human voice and the way it could be heard for thousands of feet long before microphones, amplifiers and loud speakers were invented. The story is from ancient Greece. A not so ancient Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF, takes us back in time to about the 3d Century BC:

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Science Daily reports that researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology have pinpointed the elusive factor that makes the ancient amphitheater the ancient Greek amphitheater at Epidaurus an acoustic marvel. It's the seats.

The scientists say that the rows of limestone

seats at Epidaurus form an efficient acoustics filter that hushes low-frequency background noises like the murmur of a crowd. At the same time it reflects the high frequency noises of the performers on stage off the seats and back toward the seated audience member. This in turn carries the performers voice all the way to the back rows of the theater.

While many experts speculated on the possible causes for Epidaurus' acoustics, few guessed that the seats themselves were the secret of its acoustics success. There were theories that the site's wind which blows primarily from the stage to the audience was the cause. Others credited masks that may have acted as primitive loudspeakers or the rhythm of Greek speech. More technical theories took into account the slope of the seat rows.

The report appeared in the April issue of the Journal of the Acoustics Society of America.

 From Auckland, New Zealand. for the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF,

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The theater at Epidaurus permits almost perfect intelligibility of un-amplified spoken word from the stage to all 15,000 spectators, regardless of their seating. What's not known if whether or not those who designed it were aware of the science of acoustics or if it was all nothing more than a lucky guess.

More about Epidaurus and its famed theater is on-line at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epidaurus and http://www.greeklandscapes.com/greece/epidaurus.html (Science Daily OnLine)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the

editors desk, I'm Jim Damron, N8TMW and I'm Jeff
Clark, K8JAC, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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